

## Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SECRETARY ON ITALIAN  
POLITICAL SITUATION

SUMMARY: THE AMBASSADOR HAD A WIDE RANGING CONVERSATION ON  
THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI ON JANUARY 13. FANFANI EXPRESSED  
DETERMINATION TO INCREASE AND ACCELERATE HIS EFFORTS TO REINVIGORATE  
THE DC IN PREPARATION FOR THE FORTHCOMING REGIONAL ELECTIONS  
THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW FACES AND REFORM OF THE PARTY  
ORGANIZATION. FANFANI PREDICTED THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD TAKE  
PLACE IN JUNE AND THAT HIS PARTY WOULD HOLD ITS LOSSES TO ONE  
TO THREE PERCENT. HE ALSO STATED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE CONCEPT  
OF A PREFERENTIAL DC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOCIALIST PARTY AT  
THE EXPENSE OF THE DC'S OTHER ALLIES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE AMBASSADOR ON JANUARY 13 HAD A LONG AND PRODUCTIVE  
CONVERSATION OVER LUNCH WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC)  
SECRETARY FANFANI. AFTER CONGRATULATING FANFANI FOR HIS  
CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE RECENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS  
AND HIS STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE MORO GOVERNMENT, THE AMBASSADOR  
EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION THAT EIGHT NEW FACES HAD BEEN INCLUDED AT  
THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL. THE AMBASSADOR CONGRATULATED FANFANI ON THE  
HIGH QUALITY OF THE NEW MINISTERS. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED FANFANI'S  
VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER REVITALIZING THE DC PARTY IN PREP-  
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ERATION FOR THE FORTHCOMING REGIONAL ELECTIONS. FANFANI EXPRESSED  
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CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF HIS PARTY IN THE LIGHT OF ELECTORAL REVERSES SUFFERED IN THE MAY DIVORCE REFERENDUM, THE SARDINIAN REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN JUNE AND THE RECENT SCATTERED LOCAL ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER. HOWEVER, HE STATED THAT SEVERAL NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS, ALL OF WHICH HE HOPES CAN BE AVOIDED, WOULD HAVE TO OCCUR BEFORE THE DC WOULD BE FACED WITH THE DANGER OF REALLY SERIOUS ELECTORAL LOSSES IN THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. FANFANI EMPHASIZED HIS DETERMINATION TO PRESS FORWARD EVEN MORE RAPIDLY ON THE PROCESS OF REVITALIZING THE DC - A PROCESS, HE SAID, WHICH HAS ALREADY STARTED.

2. FANFANI OUTLINED THE MAJOR ELECTORAL DANGERS FOR THE DC. THE FIRST DANGER WOULD RESULT FROM A FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS; E.E., A FAILURE TO GIVE THE ELECTORATE ANY FEELING OF GOVERNMENTAL MOVEMENT. THE SECOND WOULD BE A FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND UNIONS TO REACH AN ACCORD; THIS AS THE RESULT OF "IRRESPONSIBLE" UNION DEMANDS. THIS, FANFANI SAID, WOULD LEAD TO AN AGGRAVATION OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT. THIRDLY, FANFANI EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IF PARLIAMENT GIVES THE VOTE TO THE 18-YEAR-OLDS IN TIME FOR THEM TO VOTE IN THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS, THE DC WOULD BE LIKELY TO SUFFER. IF, AS HE HOPES, NONE OF THESE NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT OCCUR BEFORE THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS, FANFANI SAID THAT HE EXPECTS THE DC CAN LIMIT ITS ELECTORAL LOSSES TO BETWEEN ONE AND THREE PERCENT.

3. FANFANI INDICATED THAT HE DISAGREES WITH PRIME MINISTER MORO ON THE TIMING OF THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. FANFANI HOPES THEY WILL TAKE PLACE IN JUNE, BEFORE PARLIAMENT HAS TIME TO REDUCE THE VOTING AGE. MORO, ON THE OTHER HAND, FEELS THAT THEY OUGHT TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL FALL IN ORDER TO GIVE THE GOVERNMENT MORE TIME TO REALIZE SOME OF ITS OBJECTIVES.

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4. ASKED HOW HE BELIEVES THE DC CAN BE REVITALIZED, FANFANI SAID THAT HE HOPES TO CONTINUE TO BRING MORE NEW FACES AND YOUNGER PEOPLE INTO THE PARTY AND STIMULATE GREATER PARTICIPATION IN PARTY AFFAIRS ON THE PART OF THE DC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION AND OTHER INTEREST GROUPS. FANFANI SAID HE AGREED WITH A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE JESUIT PUBLICATION, "CIVILTA COTTOLICA," CALLING FOR REINVIGORATION AND PURIFICATION OF THE PARTY AND WILL "TAKE IT TO HEART." WHILE NOT SPECIFIC ABOUT HIS PLANS FOR WHAT MUST BE DONE, FANFANI EMPHASIZED HIS INTENTION TO MOBILIZE

GREATER POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE PARTY BY RENEWAL OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATION.

5. FANFANI SAID HE AND MORO AGREE THAT THERE IS NOT TIME TO HOLD A FULL SCALE DC CONGRESS PRIOR TO THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS IF THE LATTER ARE HELD IN JUNE. FANFANI IS THEREFORE THINKING INSTEAD OF HOLDING A NON-VOTING PARTY CONVENTION IN APRIL TO GENERATE FAVORABLE PUBLICITY FOR THE DC PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. THE CONVENTION WOULD BE DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE THE DESIRE OF THE PARTY TO BECOME MORE OPEN AND FORWARD LOOKING. FANFANI SAID THAT WOMEN'S AND YOUTH GROUPS, AMONG OTHERS, WOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.

6. FANFANI INTERPRETED THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS UNTIL OCTOBER AS THE RESULT OF A DESIRE BY THE PSI TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. THE PSI, HE SAID, EXPECTS A TREMENDOUS GAIN WHICH MAY EVEN BRING THEIR PARTY UP TO 20 PERCENT OF THE VOTE (VS 10.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTE RECEIVED IN THE 1970 REGIONAL ELECTIONS). FANFANI SAID THE SOCIALISTS ARE TALKING OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT LOSSES OF 7 OR 8 PERCENT WHICH WOULD BRING THE DC TO 30 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL VOTE AND THUS ENTITLE THE PSI TO DEAL WITH THE DC ON AN ALMOST EQUAL FOOTING. NEEDLESS TO SAY, FANFANI DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT PSI GAINS AND DC LOSSES WILL BE IN THE RANGE HOPED FOR BY THE SOCIALISTS. HE ALSO INDICATED HIS FIRM OPPOSITION TO THE PREFERENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DC AND PSI (AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS) NOW BEING CALLED FOR BY SOCIALIST LEADERS.

7. COMMENT: FANFANI'S COMMENTS ABOUT THE NEED TO REVITALIZE THE DC IN PREPARATION FOR THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS INDICATE THE  
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DEPTH OF HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE DANGERS FACED BY HIS PARTY IN THE COMING MONTHS. THE ATTACK ON FANFANI FROM WITHIN HIS PARTY, MUTED DURING THE RECENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS, HAS RECOMMENCED WITH RENEWED VIGOR AND THE PARTY LEFT IS OPENLY CALLING FOR HIS OUSTER PRIOR TO THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. WITH THIS IN MIND, FANFANI IS NO DOUBT ANXIOUS TO AVOID A PARTY CONGRESS PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS AND WOULD NATURALLY FAVOR A "NON-VOTING CONVENTION" INSTEAD. AS LONG AS MORO IS WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH THIS, HE IS LIKELY TO HAVE HIS WAY. VOLPE

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